

BACKGROUND - THE SAAR

I. Saar Facts:

Area: Approximately 1,000 sq. miles.

Population: Approximately one million (most densely populated area in Europe.

Composition: Practically all german; one small district is French-speaking. Roman Catholic influence strong in politics.

II. European Statute:

Embodied in the Oct 1954 French-German agreement for a Saar settlement (part of the Paris Accords "package," the so-called "European statute" provides that Saar foreign affairs and defense shall be under a European commissioner, responsible to the Western European Union Council of Ministers, but that the Saar otherwise shall be politically autonomous. It is further provided that the area is to remain tied economically to France, but that Germany is to be progressively granted equal economic access.

A. The "Statute" is provisional, pending either conclusion of a German peace treaty or a settlement in lieu thereof, at which time the "Statute" will be subject to review by all interested parties.

B. That portion of the settlement involving disposition of the Saar would then be submitted to the Saar population in a referendum.

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Referendum
III. The present Saar[^] (on acceptance of the "European Statute") is being conducted under the auspices of WEU, which has appointed a five-power neutral commission (excluding France and Germany) to assure that conditions for a free campaign and free voting exist.